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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5238
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 0811
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2355
RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY 3792
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0823
RUEHVN/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY 9658
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 1319
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY 1271
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 0348
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY 3764
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 4971
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR EAP/CM, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP,
STATE FOR AIAG, OES/IHA, S/ES-O/CMS, M/PRI, M/MED
BEIJING FOR CHRISTENSEN/GREEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [CH](#) [HK](#)

SUBJECT: PANDEMIC PLANNING: HONG KONG RESPONSE

REF: A. STATE 67936

[B](#). 06 STATE 177681

[C](#). HONG KONG 470

[1](#). (SBU) Consulate General Hong Kong appreciates the updated pandemic planning guidance and clarifications in reftel A, and submits the following response regarding Hong Kong and Macau preparedness and pandemic planning. Post is taking/has taken the following actions:

[2](#). (SBU) Consulate Employee Awareness: Information on pandemic planning is included in RSO and CLO in-briefs for new arrivals, and on the Hong Kong Consulate Intranet website. Post most recently issued an Admin Notice on influenza information on March 13, 2008 (08-043), in response to seasonal influenza outbreaks and the government's subsequent closure of primary schools for two weeks (reftel C). In the fall of 2008, Post will hold an open briefing for all employees on pandemic planning, and issue updated administrative instructions. Information on shelter-in-place, food, water and medication supplies, and health issues will be included in this outreach. Post last issued such planning guidance on October 31, 2006 in response to reftel B.

[3](#). (SBU) Post Supplies:

--Potable Water: Hong Kong water supply is potable. We have advised families and the public that one gallon of Clorox (unscented) will sanitize over 3000 gallons of water, and families should store Clorox accordingly.

--Medical Supplies: Supplies of hand sanitizer, antiviral medication, N-95 respirators, surgical masks, gloves and gowns are stockpiled at levels consistent with MED guidance and in secure locations.

--Other Medical Materials: Post maintains appropriate stocks which are continually updated.

[4](#). (SBU) Continuity of Operations:

--Coordination: Post's Avian Influenza Working Group (AIWG), chaired by the DPO, serves as the focal point for discussion, strategy and action on all pandemic planning and response matters. The AIWG includes members from: E/P, MGMT, Health Unit, CONS, CLO, RSO, OLA (defense), PAS, and FAS. The Consul General approves all actions taken by the AIWG, and the group coordinates with the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) as needed. The next crisis management tabletop exercise, scheduled for July 20-21, includes an avian influenza component.

--Tripwires: Post tripwires are reviewed at every meeting of the AIWG, and are updated in the Emergency Action Plan and Crisis and Emergency Planning Application (CEPA).

--Infrastructure Supplies: fuel, parts, computers, phones are available where it is prudent to house them. For example, we do not stockpile gasoline as we do not have the facility to do so that would meet fire safety laws and regulations. However, other components (computers, phones, etc.) are well-stocked.

--Cleaning Procedures: Post has protocols developed by the Health Unit, and approved by the AIWG, which include measures for cleaning facilities in a range of scenarios, from measures if pandemic influenza has been detected in Hong Kong to pandemic influenza symptoms are exhibited in an employee while at the Consulate.

--Cross-training Employees: Most sections of the Consulate,

HONG KONG 00001221 002 OF 002

including the Management and Consular sections, have cross-trained both American and Locally-Engaged Staff as appropriate.

--Communication Platforms: Post has the capability to communicate with Consulate employees by telephone, SMS and email. Post has the capability to communicate with American citizens by email, newsletter, post's website, and SMS. Key personnel have Open Net Everywhere (ONE) fobs to allow for work from home, and warden messages have been sent using this mechanism. The Hong Kong Government also activates an influenza hotline at "serious-response level" or when any public health concern arises.

15. (SBU) American Citizen Awareness:

--Post last issued a warden message on March 13, 2008 regarding influenza information in response to seasonal influenza outbreaks and the government's subsequent closure of primary schools for two weeks (reftel C). Post's last comprehensive pandemic planning guidance was issued on October 31, 2006 in response to reftel B. As updated information is provided to Consulate employees in the fall of 2008, information will continue to be provided to American citizens consistent with the Department's "no double standard" policy.

--Post's website has kept up-to-date and includes links to: www.pandemicflu.gov, and CA materials. To review, please visit: http://hongkong.usconsulate.gov/ci_avian.html.

--OSAC/AMCHAM: RSO and CONS regularly brief U.S. companies through the OSAC. In February 2008, Post hosted a CDC expert to discuss community mitigation at the American Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong.

--International Schools: Post has met with the primary international schools for AI briefings and contingency planning, and will continue to do so.

16. (SBU) Comment: The Hong Kong Government operates at "code orange" alert on pandemic influenza issues for most of each year, as such, the Consulate's state of readiness is quite good. In 2008, peak seasonal outbreaks in March and recent

findings of the H5N1 virus in Hong Kong wet markets provided opportunities to review, test and revise the existing planning and response mechanisms. Overall, confidence in the Hong Kong Government's and the Consulate's ability to respond to pandemic events is relatively high, but Post recognizes that in a large-scale pandemic event no amount of preparedness will be enough. Post efforts in the fall of 2008, following the Olympics and summer transfer season, will focus on renewing awareness among all Consulate employees and Americans in Hong Kong and Macau of the importance of pandemic planning consistent with guidance in reftel A. End comment.

17. (U) Post's point of contact until July 7 is ESTH Officer Dawn Schrepel, who can be reached at schrepeldm@state.gov, 852-2841-2104 (office). Her successor is Russ Westergard, who can be reached at westergardrw@state.gov, 852-2841-2202. Cunningham